TEN YEARS OF STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE FETED BY POLISARIO FRONT ON MAY 20, 1983 IN DESERT

May 20, date of the founding of the Polisario Front and of the first action by the Front in the armed struggle against the Spanish colonizers at El-Khanga, was celebrated this year by the Saharawis and large numbers of delegations from numerous nations, support groups and international groups and journalists representing newspapers and magazines from all over the world come to fete the establishment of the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic and the developments the Saharawis have made in the areas of education and health and the successes they have had militarily and politically in the ten-year struggle.

During parades marking the struggle and the ten-year period, the Saharawis, men, women and children, marched with war materials captured from the Moroccans, waving the S.A.D.R. flag. Marching groups included children (one of children 10 years of age) and paramilitary forces who protect civilian populations.

Speaking of the determination of the Saharawis, Mohamed Abdelaziz, President of the S.A.D.R. and Secretary General of the Polisario Front noted: "Day by day our people repeat no to colonialism, no to expansionism, no to division, yes to independence... We have stated our choice and repeated it with our guns on the field of battle, by our proclamation of the S.A.D.R., by our lasting determination to pursue the national liberation struggle until final victory... Our people are organized today, particularly in the freed territory and in exile. We direct our own affairs through the popular committees. Thanks to our national Congresses and to our organization in revolutionary cells, our people decide general policies, tasks of the liberation struggle and of building a state. We are right to be proud of this."

PUBLICATIONS UPDATE 1983


The Report, made to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs includes a list of those persons participating in the study, their itinerary, some general observations, the background on U.S. policy in the conflict, implications of the conflict for U.S. interests and an appendix with several O.A.U. documents on the proposed referendum for the Saharawis and recommendations of the O.A.U. implementation committee.


The booklet contains an appeal of the Sahrawi Red Crescent to the international community to react against the use of the U.S. supplied cluster bombs in the Western Sahara against the Saharawi nomadic populations who have returned to the area. It notes that fragmentation bombs have been used in the regions of Smara, Hausa, Bou Craa and Ras-el-Khanfra, reminds the reader that cluster bombs are still prohibited by the Geneva Conventions.

5e CONGRES DU FRONT POLISARIO, 12 - 16 octobre 1982, Association des Amis de la République Arabe Sahraouie Démocratique, B.P. 244, 75227 Paris, France, 55 French francs plus postage.

See note on page three about the booklet. In French. The booklet is available from the Association des Amis de la République Arabe Sahraouie Démocratique at the above address.
HEARING OF THE SUBCOMMITTEES ON INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND SCIENTIFIC AFFAIRS AND AFRICA OF THE HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, MARCH 15
NOTES FROM THE TESTIMONY OF RICHARD PARKER, EDITOR, THE MIDDLE EAST JOURNAL, AND FORMER AMBASSADOR TO ALGERIA AND MOROCCO.

On U.S. interests in North Africa:

"More broadly still, our principal interest in this region is in the maintenance of independent states which will resist Soviet penetration. The Soviets have long had an interest in base facilities in North Africa, and we and our European allies would be seriously disturbed if they were to have access to, say, Moroccan or Algerian air and naval facilities such as they once enjoyed in Egypt. We therefore have an abiding interest in maintaining friendly relations with the states of this area, where that is possible, and in avoiding polarization into pro-American and pro-Soviet camps. This is done by keeping lines of cooperation open to all parties as long as possible, as long as their actions are not malevolent, and avoiding over-identification with one party or the other in local disputes.

"I do not think our current policy has taken sufficient account of the perils of overidentification and involvement in a local quarrel, and what that means for United States interests in Algeria and in the region as a whole. § I gather that efforts are underway to correct the tilt, or at least balance it, and the recent visit to Algiers by a trade mission led by Secretary of Commerce Baldrige was a good first step, but more needs to be done."

§(Underlining by editor of SPSC Letter)

On change in U.S. policy:

"As noted above, there has been a clear movement towards a more openly pro-Moroccan posture under the Reagan administration. § While one can argue that much of this - the visits, declarations, speeches, commissions, etc. - are part of the normal hoopla which our political system generates, foreigners are often unable to distinguish our reality from our rhetoric, and they tend to take our public statements seriously. More importantly, perhaps, our own people begin to believe them, and very soon you find American officials, particularly in the military, who believe they are fighting the advance guard of the Red Army in the Sahara. §

SCHOOLING CONTINUES FOR SAHARAWI CHILDREN IN REFUGEE CAMPS IN SOUTHERN ALGERIA

The above is a copy of a page from one of the secondary school manuals used in Saharawi camp schools. Contributions through the Federal German Support Committee and other German groups have made possible the printing of these manuals. In the past seven years a great deal of progress has been made in the school situation for the Saharawi children in the camps. By October 1982 enough schools had been constructed in the dairas (camps) to accommodate all children six years old and above in elementary schools. Secondary schools have been constructed in the willayas (provinces). Students learn and use three languages in school: Hassania, classical Arabic and Spanish. The manual above, printed in Spanish, has scenes from the camps as illustrations.

PUBLICATION UPDATE

A Report of the 5th Congress of the Polisario Front held October 12-16,1982 at Martyr El Haddad in the S.A.D.R. has been published in booklet form by the Association des Amis de la République Arabe Sahraouie Démocratique in French. Included in the pamphlet of 75 pages is a review of actions taken by the Congress, the organizational chart of the S.A.D.R. and the Polisario Front, etc.
DOUBLE-SPEAK FROM STATE DEPARTMENT CONTINUES ON SAHARAWI INDEPENDENCE ISSUE AND O.A.U.

At the March 15, 1983 "Hearings on U.S. policy in the Western Sahara" State Department spokesman David T. Schneider testified:

"U.S. Government policy on the Western Sahara conflict has been consistent. We support fully and encourage all parties to support the Organization of African Unity's (O.A.U.) ceasefire/referendum formula for a negotiated settlement. We envisage such negotiations as seeking to arrange a ceasefire and the working out of modalities for holding a referendum on self-determination."

What Schneider glosses over in his first statement is that U.S. policy has changed, at least in the practical application of regulations concerning arms supplies to Morocco, of increasing financial assistance for military grants and loans to that nation, and in the accepted use of U.S. arms (including cluster bombs) and military advisors in the Western Sahara proper. In 1977 these practices were not acceptable and the State Department denied knowledge of use of U.S. arms in the Western Sahara. Today there is no question that the Reagan Administration and the State Department accept and have urged this kind of U.S. assistance. What Mr. Schneider also glosses over is that the O.A.U. Implementation Committee has already developed the "modalities" for holding a referendum on self-determination. Morocco has continually refused to fully accept those "modalities" and U.N. urging to deal directly with the Polisario Front.

Schneider further testified that:

"We believe that the war is not winable and that its continuation is not in anyone's interest. We hope that a referendum can lead to the end of the conflict in the area. We do not seek a pre-determined outcome."

To state that the "war is not winable" and then simultaneously to increase military assistance to Morocco for use in the Western Sahara is either a cynical act (and a waste of taxpayer funds) or an attempt to mislead well-meaning members of Congress into believing that U.S. policy does actually support the O.A.U. initiatives for peace rather than militate against the O.A.U. solutions and resolutions.

In his testimony Schneider also stated:

"The effort to seat the self-styled Saharan Democratic Arab Republic (SDAR) (sic.) as a member of the O.A.U. (supported by Algeria and Libya, among others) contributed to the collapse of two successive attempts to convene a summit meeting of the Organization of African Unity. The Polisario continues to demand that the SDAR (sic.) be seated as a full member of the O.A.U., an act we believe would prejudge the outcome of an eventual referendum."

Again Schneider glosses over two facts. One, the "self-styled SDAR" is recognized by a majority of the members of the O.A.U. and was admitted to the O.A.U. through the provisions of the O.A.U. Charter. Secondly, the Polisario Front voluntarily agreed not to attend the second attempted O.A.U. annual summit in Tripoli in 1983. He further neglects to mention the active role the U.S. played in those two abortive Tripoli meetings to keep the O.A.U. from meeting. (See article on U.S. influence at the O.A.U.) Further, in signalling Algeria and Libya, it appears that the State Department wants to wave the red flag of radical states connected to the Soviet Union as the main supporters of the Polisario cause. He ignores the reality that more than fifty-five nations (about 1/3 of the nations in the world) recognize the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic as a state.

There is no new tactic by the State Department to date. The attempt in all House Hearings on the issue from 1977 in testimony by the State Department has been to manipulate language, slow down inquiry, obfuscate issues. If this has not been the intent, there is nothing in the careful reading of the testimony to lead one to a different conclusion, and certainly there is no evidence that supports the U.S. contention that we are neutral observers of the conflict in Western Sahara.

What is at issue, it would seem, is what is in the long-range U.S. interest. In recent years it appears that very-short-range interests are served and incorrect assessments are made of what will appear to make the U.S. strong. In the long run, blatant attempts to control an organization like the O.A.U. will backfire. In the long-run the U.S. will have to decide how much it can and will be able to supply in military support of unfavorable, perhaps lost, causes. We cannot simultaneously supply troops, arms, supplies in Central America, North Africa, East Africa, etc., and deal with the budget deficits and economic difficulties of U.S. citizens. The shot-gun approach to world diplomacy is out of date. Our supplying of arms will not supply us with friends.

MAY 20, 1973 to MAY 20, 1983
TEN YEARS ANNIVERSARY OF THE POLISARIO FRONT
In an interview with Martha Wenger for CounterSpy, June - August, 1983, Madjid Abduallah, the Polisario Front's representative at the U. N., talks about the U.S. cluster bombs used in the Western Sahara:

"They (the Moroccans)§ have used them (the cluster bombs)§ everywhere they think there is a concentration of population, of troops, or a base in Western Sahara, far away from the wall. On civilians too. There were civilians hit. They (the bombs)§ are used for intimidation. After the Moroccans had retreated behind the wall, people had started to revive their nomadic life, but with the cluster bombs, people have fled south, even into Mauritania or Algeria, to get far away from them. The kinds they are using are CBU-58s and CBU-71s."

§(Inset by editor of SPSC Letter)

On U.S. support of Morocco in the war he said to Wenger:

"We know they (the American advisors)§ are supervising the war - the wall itself was an American idea. At any given time there are at least 35 U.S. advisors in Morocco. Their work is to deal with the war, how the Moroccans can win; training new commandos like the ones in El Salvador. They visit Western Sahara from time to time and they provide the Moroccans with sensitive information about the movements and base locations of the Polisario Front gathered from satellites. I don't know which planes or satellites they are using, but the American technology and also the physical presence of the advisors is a very important part of the battle, and the gathering of information about our side. Because the U.S. is supplying information, the Moroccans have not needed to use the OV-10 counterinsurgency and the C-130 transport aircraft to make reconnaissance flights over the liberated territories in the last two years."

To put to rest speculation that Algerian policy on the SADR/Western Sahara issue has changed since the meetings between King Hassan and President Chadli Bendjedid, the editors of Révolution Africaine, the official journal of the F.L.N. of which President Chadli Bendjedid is Secretary General, published an article in the May 20-26, 1983 issue noting the following:

On Algeria's position:

"The position of our country remains unchanged since 1975, the date of the outbreak of the Moroccan/Saharawi conflict. The position of Algeria remains clear: the obligation lies with Morocco and the Polisario Front alone to engage in a dialogue about their dispute."

On the O.A.U. Summit and the status of the S.A.D.R. at that meeting:

"The 19th Summit of the Organization of African Unity which will take place in Addis-Ababa in June and at which the S.A.D.R. will be present, undoubtedly will permit this problem to be put in the context of a better understanding between the two parties concerned in conformity with the resolution of Nairobi (1981).§"

On the status of the S.A.D.R.:

"the 51st member of the O.A.U."